
JOB 2: 1 Again, on the day when the God's sons came to present themselves before the LORD, Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD.

The sons of God once more present themselves before him; and Satan comes also, accusing Job as a person whose steadfastness would be soon shaken, provided his body were to be subjected to sore afflictions, Job 2:1-5. He receives permission to afflict Job, and smites him with sore boils, Job 2:6-8. His wife reviles him, Job 2:9. His pious reproof, Job 2:10. His three friends come to visit and mourn with him, Job 2:11-13.

Verse 1

Again there was a day - How long this was after the former trial, we know not: probably one whole year, when, as the Targum intimates, it was the time of the annual atonement; which, if so, must have been at least one whole year after the former; and during which period the patience and resignation of Job had sufficient scope to show themselves. This appearance of the sons of God and Satan is to be understood metaphorically - there could be nothing real in it - but it is intended to instruct us in the doctrine of the existence of good and evil spirits; that Satan pursues man with implacable enmity, and that he can do no man hurt, either in his person or property, but by the especial permission of God; and that God gives him permission only when he purposes to overrule it for the greater manifestation of his own glory, and the greater good of his tempted followers.

JOB 2: 2 The LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" Satan answered the LORD, and said, "From going back and forth in the earth, and from walking up and down in it."

JOB 2: 3 The LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? For there is no one like him in the earth, a blameless and an upright man, one who fears God, and turns away from evil. He still maintains his integrity, although you incited me against him, to ruin him without cause."

Verse 3

To destroy him without cause - Thou wishedst me to permit thee to destroy a man whose sins have not called for so heavy a judgment. This seems to be the meaning of this saying. The original word, לבלעו leballo, signifies to swallow down or devour; and this word St. Peter had no doubt in view in the place quoted on Job 2:7 of the preceding chapter: "Your adversary the devil goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may Devour; ζητων, τινα καταπιη, seeking whom he may Swallow or Gulp Down. See the note on 1Pet 5:8.

JOB 2: 4 Satan answered the LORD, and said, "Skin for skin. Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life.

Verse 4

Skin for skin - That is, A man will part with all he has in the world to save his life; and he will part with all by piecemeal, till he has nothing left on earth, and even be thankful, provided his life be spared. Thou hast only destroyed his property; thou hast left him his life and his health. Thou hast not touched his flesh nor his bone; therefore he is patient and resigned. Man, through the love of life, will go much farther: he will give up one member to save the rest; yea, limb after limb as long as there is hope that, by such sacrifices, life may be spared or prolonged. This is the meaning given to the passage by the Targum; and, I believe, the true one; hence, Job 2:6, the Lord says, Save his life.

JOB 2: 5 But stretch out your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will renounce you to your face."

Verse 5

He will curse thee to thy face - Literally, If he will not bless thee to thy face or appearances. His piety to thee will be always regulated by thy bounty to him. See the note on Job 1:11.

JOB 2: 6 The LORD said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your hand. Only spare his life."

Verse 6

But save his life - His body thou shalt have permission to afflict, but against his life thou shalt have no power; therefore take care of his life. The original, נפשו שמר naphsho shemor, may be translated, keep his soul; but the word also signifies life; yet in the hands of the destroyer the life of this holy man is placed! How astonishing is the economy of salvation! It is so managed, by the unlimited power and skill of God, that the grand adversary of souls becomes himself, by the order of God, the preserver of that which the evil of his nature incessantly prompts him to destroy!

JOB 2: 7 So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD, and struck Job with painful sores from the sole of his foot to his head.

Verse 7

Sore boils - בשחין רע bischin ra, "with an evil inflammation." What this diabolical disorder was, interpreters are not agreed. Some think it was the leprosy, and this is the reason why he dwelt by himself, and had his habitation in an unclean place, without the city, (Septuagint, εξω της πωλεως), or in the open air: and the reason why his friends beheld him afar off, Job 2:12, was because they knew that the disorder was infectious.

His scraping himself with a potsherd indicates a disease accompanied with intolerable itching, one of the characteristics of the smallpox. Query, Was it not this disorder? And in order to save his life (for that he had in especial command) did not Satan himself direct him to the cool regimen, without which, humanly speaking, the disease must have proved fatal? In the elephantiasis and leprosy there is, properly speaking, no boil or detached inflammation, or swelling, but one uniform disordered

state of the whole surface, so that the whole body is covered with loathsome scales, and the skin appears like that of the elephant, thick and wrinkled, from which appearance the disorder has its name. In the smallpox it is different; each pock or pustule is a separate inflammation, tending to suppuration; and during this process, the fever is in general very high, and the anguish and distress of the patient intolerable. When the suppuration is pretty far advanced, the itching is extreme; and the hands are often obliged to be confined to prevent the patient from literally tearing his own flesh.

JOB 2: 8 He took for himself a potsherd to scrape himself with, and he sat among the ashes.

JOB 2: 9 Then his wife said to him, "Do you still maintain your integrity? Renounce God, and die."

Verse 9

Then said his wife - To this verse the Septuagint adds the following words: "Much time having elapsed, his wife said unto him, How long dost thou stand steadfast, saying, 'Behold, I wait yet a little longer looking for the hope of my Salvation?' Behold thy memorial is already blotted out from the earth, together with thy sons and thy daughters, the fruits of my pains and labors, for whom with anxiety I have labored in vain. Thyself also sittest in the rottenness of worms night and day, while I am a wanderer from place to place, and from house to house, waiting for the setting of the sun, that I may rest from my labors, and from the griefs which oppress me. Speak therefore some word against God, and die." We translate *ברך אלהים ומת* *barech Elohim vamuth*, Curse God, and die. The verb *ברך* *barach* is supposed to include in it the ideas of cursing and blessing; but it is not clear that it has the former meaning in any part of the sacred writings, though we sometimes translate it so. Here it seems to be a strong irony. Job was exceedingly afflicted, and apparently dying through sore disease; yet his soul was filled with gratitude to God. His wife, destitute of the salvation which her husband possessed, gave him this ironical reproof. Bless God, and die - What! bless him for his goodness, while he is destroying all that thou hast! bless him for his support, while he is casting thee down and destroying thee! Bless on, and die. The Targum says that Job's wife's name was Dinah, and that the words which she spake to him on this occasion were *ברוך מימרא דיי ומית* *berich meymera dayai umith*. Bless the word of the Lord, and die. \\

Ovid has such an irony as I suppose this to have been: -

Quid vos sacra juvant? quid nunc Aegyptia prosuntSistra? -

Cum rapiant mala fata bonos, ignoscite fasso, Sollicitor nullos esse putare deos.

Vive plus, moriere pius; cole sacra, colentemMors gravis a templis in cava busta trahet.

Amor. lib. iii., Eleg. ix. ver. 33. "In vain to gods (if gods there are) we pray,

And needless victims prodigally pay;

Worship their sleeping deities: yet death

Scorns votaries, and stops the praying breath.

To hallow'd shrines intruding fate will come,

And drag you from the altar to the tomb."

Stepney.

JOB 2: 10 But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" In all this Job didn't sin with his lips.

Verse 10

Thou speakest as one of the foolish - Thou speakest like an infidel; like one who has no knowledge of God, of religion, or of a future state. The Targum, who calls this woman Dinah, translates thus: "Thou speakest like one of those women who have wrought folly in the house of their father." This is in reference to an ancient rabbinical opinion, that Job lived in the days of the patriarch Jacob, whose daughter Dinah he had married.

Shall we receive good - This we have received in great abundance for many years:

And shall we not receive evil? - Shall we murmur when He afflicts us for a day, who has given us health for so many years? Shall we blaspheme his name for momentary privations, who has given us such a long succession or enjoyments? His blessings are his own: he never gave them to us; they were only lent. We have had the long, the free, the unmerited use of them; and shall we be offended at the Owner, when he comes to reclaim his own property? This would be foolish, ungrateful, and wicked. So may every one reason who is suffering from adversity. But who, besides Job, reasons thus? Man is naturally discontented and ungrateful.

In all this did not Job sin with his lips - The Chaldee adds, But in his heart he thought words. He had surmisings of heart, though he let nothing escape from his lips.

JOB 2: 11 Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that had come on him, they each came from his own place: Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite, and they made an appointment together to come to sympathise with him and to comfort him.

Verse 11

Job's three friends - The first was Eliphaz the Temanite; or, as the Septuagint has it, Ελιφάζ ὁ Θαϊμανῶν βασιλεὺς, Eliphaz the king on the Thaimanites. Eliphaz was one of the sons of Esau; and Teman, of Eliphaz, Gen 36:10, Gen 36:11. Teman was a city of Edom, Jer 49:7-20; Eze 25:13; Amo 1:11, Amo 1:12.

Bildad the Shuhite - Or, as the Septuagint, Βαλδαδ ὁ Συχεῶν τυραννός, Baldad, tyrant of the Suchites. Shuah was the son of Abraham by Keturah: and his posterity is reckoned among the Easterns. It is supposed he should be placed with his brother Midian, and his brother's sons Sheba and Dedan. See Gen 25:2, Gen 25:3. Dedan was a city of Edom, see Jer 49:8, and seems to have been situated in its southern boundary, as Teman was in its western. Eze 25:13.

Zophar the Naamathite - Or, according to the Septuagint, Σωφάρ Μιναιῶν βασιλεὺς, Sophar king of the Minaites. He most probably came from that Naamah, which was bordering upon the Edomites to

the south and fell by lot to the tribe of Judah, Joshua 15:21-41. These circumstances, which have already been mentioned in the introduction, prove that Job must have dwelt in the land of Edom, and that all his friends dwelt in Arabia Petraea, or in the countries immediately adjacent. That some of those Eastern people were highly cultivated, we have at least indirect proof in the case of the Temanites, Jer 49:7: Concerning Edom thus saith the Lord of hosts, Is wisdom no more in Teman? Is counsel perished from the prudent? Is their wisdom vanished? They are celebrated also in Baruch 3:22, 23. Speaking of wisdom he says: It hath not been heard of in Chanaan; neither hath it been seen in Theman. The Agarenes that seek wisdom upon earth, the merchants of Meran and of Theman, the expounders of fables, and searchers out of understanding, none of these have known the way of wisdom. It is evident enough from these quotations that the inhabitants of those districts were celebrated for their knowledge; and the sayings of Job's three friends are proofs that their reputation for wisdom stood on a very solid foundation.

JOB 2: 12 When they lifted up their eyes from a distance, and didn't recognise him, they raised their voices, and wept; and they each tore his robe, and sprinkled dust on their heads toward the sky.

Verse 12

They rent every one his mantle - I have already had frequent occasions to point out and illustrate, by quotations from the ancients, the actions that were used in order to express profound grief; such as wrapping themselves in sackcloth, covering the face, strewing dust or ashes upon the head, sitting upon the bare ground, etc., etc.; significant actions which were in use among all nations.

JOB 2: 13 So they sat down with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his grief was very great.

Verse 13

They sat down with him upon the ground seven days - They were astonished at the unprecedented change which had taken place in the circumstances of this most eminent man; they could not reconcile his present situation with any thing they had met with in the history of Divine providence. The seven days mentioned here were the period appointed for mourning. The Israelites mourned for Jacob seven days, Gen 50:10. And the men of Jabesh mourned so long for the death of Saul, 1Sam 31:13; 1Chr 10:12. And Ezekiel sat on the ground with the captives at Chebar, and mourned with and for them seven days. Eze 3:15. The wise son of Sirach says, "Seven days do men mourn for him that is dead;" Sirach 22:12. So calamitous was the state of Job, that they considered him as a dead man: and went through the prescribed period of mourning for him.

They saw that his grief was very great - This is the reason why they did not speak to him: they believed him to be suffering for heavy crimes, and, seeing him suffer so much, they were not willing to add to his distresses by invectives or reproach. Job himself first broke silence.